



NH Democratic Party

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MEDIA

BACKGROUNDER

New Hampshire 2008: First-in-the-Nation Primary

Summary

The New Hampshire Presidential Primary has been first in the nation since 1920, born out of a farmer's desire that citizens vote directly for delegates who would choose a party nominee for president instead of political bosses. By 1952, when Americans began to vote directly for presidential candidates, New Hampshire's primary came into the national spotlight. And like the best of our traditions, the New Hampshire Presidential Primary protects, strengthens, and extends the democratic principles upon which this nation was founded.

Presidential hopefuls encounter a highly informed electorate in New Hampshire. Nearly a year before the primary, the state's voters are attending meetings with the candidates, listening to speeches, reading reports, and sorting through the issues they believe important. Then, once Granite State voters have chosen a candidate, they donate a great amount of their time and money. In New Hampshire, political engagement means more than just voting, a 2000 study by the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation found that a higher percentage of Granite Staters donate their time than do people in any other state.

"It's the last chance we, and the American public, get to see true hand-to-hand politics. I can drive from town to town and watch candidates go to local halls and answer questions from citizens for an hour... It's a great process to watch, and it works." - **Tim Russert, Host of NBC's Meet The Press**

"The great virtue of these difficult people, who rather enjoy their reputation for being hard to please, is that they turn out. It is the most powerful reason that [New Hampshire] is entitled to the privilege of being our first primary." - **Mary McGorery, Washington Post**

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Jan 3rd-Jan 8th, The Most Exciting Week in American Politics!

The stretch of time between the Iowa Caucuses and the New Hampshire Primary is known to be the most exciting week in American politics. This year will be no different. Expect many campaigns to have “homecoming” parties in New Hampshire to promote their results in Iowa and kick off an action packed few days. Some may even occur in the early hours morning hours of January 4th!

The New Hampshire Democratic Party will be hosting the “100 Club” Dinner on Friday January 4th at the Hampshire Dome in Milford. This will be the largest Democratic event of the week with crowds in the multiple thousands. Expect most of the major candidates to attend. Please see www.nhdp.org or call 603-225-6899 for credentials.

On January 5th, WMUR-TV, the local ABC station, will co-host a debate with Facebook, the online community website. The debates will take place at St. Anselm’s college in Manchester.

There will many more exciting events to take part in. Please continue to check with each campaign as they schedule appearances.

How We Are Different Than Iowa

Unlike Iowa, the New Hampshire Primary is run by the State of New Hampshire. The New Hampshire Democratic Party does not administer the primary or report the results. You should expect the same rules and events that you would at a normal state run election. Most polls open between 6 and 8am and close around 7pm. However, there is one poll that opens at 12:01 am on Primary Day (See Below).

Therefore, the New Hampshire Democratic Party does not have a need for general credentialing. You are welcome to spend time outside a polling location but there is no indoor, formal process like the caucus setting that you will find in Iowa. Plan on wearing your normal press credentials when traveling around the state.

The New Hampshire Primary draws an enormously large turnout. This is in part due to the fact that the primary is open to undeclared voters. An undeclared voter is welcome to register with the party of their choice at the poll, vote in the primary and then re-register as undeclared on their way out. Similarly, New Hampshire allows same day registration to anyone providing proper documentation.

Here are combined turnout numbers from years past, in percentage of total electorate:

2004: 41%
2000: 51%
1996: 44%
1992: 61%
1988: 49%
1984: 37%
1980: 51%
1976: 48%

The Famous “Dixville Notch” Midnight Voting Tradition

Dixville Notch was granted the authority to conduct its own elections in 1960 and chose to open its polls at midnight. In 1964, the primary election returns were the first in New Hampshire to be reported by UPI and the Associated Press.

Since then, Dixville Notch has gained international media attention as the first community to vote in the presidential primary season.

All registered voters in Dixville Notch gather and are counted before the balloting takes place. The "Ballot Room" of the Balsams Hotel resort serves as the polling place; this room features separate voting booths for each citizen.

The tradition was first organized by prominent Dixville Notch resident Neil Tillotson (1898 - 17 October 2001), who was traditionally the first voter; he would reportedly hold his ballot over the ballot box while watching his wristwatch. At the moment of midnight, Tillotson would drop the ballot into the ballot box and the rest of the town's residents would follow suit. Since Tillotson's death from pneumonia in 2001 at the age of 102, the first voter has been chosen by random ballot beforehand.

In the most recent presidential election of November 2nd, 2004, the village had 26 registered voters.

The votes are counted immediately after all are received; the Dixville Notch results of the primary often lead morning news programs on election day.

Hart's Location residents also cast their votes at midnight during each presidential election year. The Hart's Location midnight voting tradition, which began in 1948, actually predates the Dixville Notch practice; however, Dixville Notch generally receives greater publicity because Hart's Location discontinued the practice in the 1960s, only to reinstate it in 1996.

The New Hampshire Democratic Party Delegate Selection Process

The delegate selection process is open to all voters who wish to participate as Democrats in the presidential primary, including new voters and undeclared voters who wish to register. To qualify as a district-level delegate candidate, you may run for election only within the congressional district in which you are eligible to vote.

The filing period to run for delegate to the Democratic National Convention in Denver closed on December 5, 2007. In order to qualify for candidacy you must file a statement designating your presidential preference and a signed pledge of support for that candidate with the New Hampshire Democratic Party.

On December 15, 2007, district-level delegates will be elected at the district delegate selection caucus. Presidential campaigns will select the location of their own caucuses and properly advertise them.

Convention delegates selected at the district level shall be allocated in proportion to the percentage of the primary vote won by that presidential candidate in that district. Each presidential candidate who receives at least 15% of the primary vote will be awarded delegates.

New Hampshire is allocated 30 delegates and 4 alternates to the convention. 22 pledged delegates and 8 unpledged "super delegates".

To learn more about the delegate selection process please see www.nhdp.org

Election Night: January 8th, 2007

If you would like to attend the election night parties of any of the candidates, you should plan on contacting them for credentials (Please see contact information below). Because the New Hampshire Democratic Party does not tally or

announce the results of the primary, we do not have a central facility open on election night. You should plan on tuning into the local TV and radio stations to hear the results as they are reported.

What Happens When It's All Over?

There is never a dull moment in New Hampshire politics. As soon as the presidential primary ends, the state voters will turn to the most exciting Senate race in the country. Incumbent John E. Sununu is one of the most vulnerable Senators in the country and Democrats fully intend on replacing him with a Senator who will fight for New Hampshire's priorities, not George Bush's. For more information on this race, please see www.stopsununu.com

Below is a summary from the UNH Survey Center after their latest poll on October 3rd 2007. The full report and poll can be viewed at: www.unh.edu/survey-center/:

Sununu defeated Shaheen 51% to 46% in 2002 in the midst of the runup to the war in Iraq. But Sununu and other Republicans are now on the unpopular side of the war in Iraq and his chances for reelection are greatly diminished by his support for the war. Anti-war groups, such as MoveOn.org, have targeted Sununu and have already begun running negative ads against him, making him even more vulnerable. And it appears that their efforts are working -- Sununu's favorability ratings have dropped steadily over the past year and he is now viewed favorably by only 40 percent of New Hampshire adults, 37 percent having an unfavorable opinion of him, 14 percent are neutral and 9 percent don't know enough to say. Sununu's net favorability rating is a very low +3 percent, down from +30% one year ago. Sununu's favorability ratings are at the lowest since he was elected senator. "Sununu faces a much more challenging political environment in 2008 than he did in 2002," said Andrew Smith, Director of the UNH Survey Center.

Facts, Figures and Notables

Governor: John Lynch (Democrat). Was also the Executive Director of the NH Party in 1976. (603)-271-2121

Senate President: Sylvia Larsen (D-Concord) (603) 271-2111

Speaker of the House: Terie Norelli (D-Portsmouth) (603) 271-3661

Congressional Delegation:

Representative Carol Shea-Porter (D-District 1) , Representative Paul Hodes (D-District 2), Senator Judd Gregg (R), Senator John Sununu (R)

State Chair: Raymond Buckley. Elected in 2007. Former 12 term State Representative, Manchester Alderman and Deputy Whip of the House of Representatives.

Past State Chairs:

Kathy Sullivan: 1999-2007. Endorsed Hillary Clinton. (603) 345-7057

Joe Keefe: 1994-1996. Endorsed Chris Dodd. (800) 767-1729

Joe Bruno: 1983-1987. Endorsed Bill Richardson. (603) 296-2222

State Motto: Live Free or Die

State Capitol: Concord

State Population: 1,315,000

(Source: NH Office of Energy and Planning, based on 2006 U.S. Census Bureau Estimate)

Highest Employment By Industry:

Trade, Transportation & Utilities (145,400)

Educational & Health Services (102,700)

Government (90,800)

(Source: NH Economic and Labor Market Information Bureau, June 2007)

Median Household Income: \$49,467

(Source: NH Office of Energy and Planning, based on 2000 U.S. Census)

New Hampshire Presidential Primary Timeline

1913 NH legislature passed a law introduced by Rep. Stephen Bullock (D), a farmer from Richmond, NH, that provided for the election of delegates to the National Conventions by direct vote of the people. The first primary date was set for the third Tuesday of May in 1916.

1915 NH legislature amended the 1913 law to change the date from the third Tuesday in May to the second Tuesday in March, or Town Meeting Day. This allowed the towns to save money by combining the two voting days and only opening the town halls once.

1916 New Hampshire holds its first primary on the first Tuesday of March. Indiana held its primary one week earlier, and Minnesota held its primary on the same day as New Hampshire's primary.

1920 New Hampshire's primary became first-in-the-nation. Minnesota returned to a caucus, and Indiana moved its primary date to May.

1952 Forty-three percent of eligible NH voters turn out to vote in the NH primary. This was the first primary in which voters cast ballots directly for presidential and vice presidential candidates. The New Hampshire Primary became an event of political significance when Dwight Eisenhower demonstrated his broad voter appeal by defeating Robert Taft. Meanwhile Estes Kefauver defeated incumbent President Harry Truman, leading him to abandon his campaign for a third term.

1956 Senator Estes Kefauver defeated Governor Adlai Stevenson II.

1960 Senator John F. Kennedy won with no serious opposition.

1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson won with no serious opposition.

1968 President Lyndon B. Johnson defeated Senator Eugene McCarthy by a poorer than expected margin, 49%-42%. Consequently he withdrew from the race.

1971 The number of signatures necessary to place a candidate's name on the ballot was increased from 50 to 500 in each of the two congressional districts. For the first time a filing fee was established, requiring candidates to pay \$500 in addition to providing the requisite signatures.

1972 Senator Edmund Muskie defeated Senator George McGovern and Mayor Samuel William Yorty.

1975 Through legislation introduced by Rep. Jim Splaine, (D-Portsmouth), NH Primary and Town Meeting dates were separated, allowing the NH Primary to be scheduled on “the first Tuesday in March or on the Tuesday immediately preceding the date on which any other New England state shall hold a similar election, whichever is earlier.”

1976 Governor Jimmy Carter defeated Congressman Mo Udall, Senator Birch Bayh II, Senator Fred Harris and Ambassador Sargent Shriver.

1977 The NH House and Senate further revised the 1975 bill by removing the words “New England” so that the NH Primary would be held before any other state holding a similar election.

1980 President Carter defeated Senator Ted Kennedy and Governor Jerry Brown.

1983 The signature requirement is abolished and the filing fee is raised to \$1,000.00. This made it easier for lesser-known candidates to enter the race.

1984 Senator Gary Hart defeated Vice President Walter Mondale, Senator John Glenn Jr., Reverend Jesse Jackson and Senator George McGovern.

1988 Governor Michael Dukakis defeated Congressman Dick Gephardt, Senator Paul Simon, Reverend Jesse Jackson and Senator Al Gore.

1992 Senator Paul Tsongas defeated Governor Bill Clinton, Senator Bob Kerrey, Senator Tom Harkin and Governor Jerry Brown.

1996 New Hampshire allows Election Day voter registration for the first time, resulting in 26,622 new voters. New Hampshire experienced a high-record voter turnout, almost twice that of any other state. President Clinton won with no serious opposition.

1999 New legislation gave additional flexibility to the Secretary of State to move the NH Presidential Primary date “seven days or more” ahead of any other state holding a “similar election.”

2000 Vice President Al Gore defeated Senator Bill Bradley.

2004 Senator John Kerry defeated Governor Howard Dean, General Wesley Clark, Senator John Edwards, Senator Joe Lieberman, Congressman Dennis Kucinich and Civil Rights Activist Al Sharpton.

New Hampshire Presidential Press Contacts

Joe Biden, Evan Carlson, 603-703-4898, evancarlson@joebiden.com

Hillary Clinton-Emily Cain, 603-371-2215, nhpress@hillaryclinton.com

Chris Dodd-Bryan DeAngelis, 603-668-3633, bdeangelis@chrisdodd.com

John Edwards-Eddy Vale, 603-606-3613, evale@johnedwards.com

Mike Gravel-Spencer McNeiel, 617-548-8158, spencer@gravel2008.us

Dennis Kucinich, Chris Collier, 603-254-3722, chris.collier@adelphis.net

Barack Obama-Katherine Lyons, 603-668-2008, klyons@barackobama.com

Bill Richardson-Alex Goepfert, 603-657-7384, agoepfert@richardsonforpresident.com



Once-granite New Hampshire GOP crumbling

Article Published Dec 4, 2007

LACONIA – During the French Revolution, angry mobs were not content to just chop off a monarch's head. They attacked the royal tombs and buried the remains of long-gone kings in quicklime, lest any earthly bits of the old rulers survive.

With similar passion, though in a nonviolent manner, New Hampshire voters seem intent on removing the last traces of the Republican Party in their state. Last year, they threw out their two Republican congressmen. They ended Republican control of both houses in the Legislature. They re-elected their Democratic governor by the largest margin in state history.

What made the transformation remarkable was that New Hampshire had long been a Republican stronghold. Not in 122 years have Democrats held both the Legislature and governorship.

Republicans used to praise fast-growing and tax-averse New Hampshire as a northern Sunbelt state, one of their own. They were so overwhelmingly in charge that Democrats often couldn't find candidates for state office. Here in conservative Belknap County, in the Lakes Region, they once recruited a homeless person, just to have a name on the ballot.

Now, even in Belknap County, Democrats are getting elected in good numbers.

"The Democrats have evolved from lovable losers to very aggressive partisans who believe they can win any electoral contest they put their minds to," Dante Scala, a political scientist at the University of New Hampshire, told me.

I asked several newspaper editors whether they thought the repudiation of all things Republican was a flare-up of frustration with the Bush administration (over the Iraq War, deficits and social conservatism) or reflects a more lasting trend. That, the editors all said, is the \$64,000 question.

After all, Republicans faced a tough 2006 election for local as well as national reasons. And many of the Republicans

who lost office were the sort of fiscally conservative social moderates that independents and many Democrats tend to like.

The answer has national import, because New Hampshire holds the first presidential primary. Some 43 percent of its registered voters are unaffiliated with any party. Because independents may vote in either primary, they can easily influence the outcome of one or both races.

They will surely respond to the results of the Iowa caucuses, a mere five days earlier. Thus, the possibilities of what will happen here on Jan. 8 are many.

The question again: Do the recent elections reflect temporary choler at the Republican leadership or a more fundamental shift?

The changing demographics certainly don't bode well for the Grand Old Party.

"There used to be places that would vote Republican no matter how bad a year it was," Scala said. "Nowadays, those reserves are really depleted."

Many of the old-time Yankees – the "genealogical Republicans" – are dying off. They are being replaced by fairly liberal retirees from other states.

New Hampshire has long attracted blue-collar Republicans, angry over taxes, from Massachusetts. But they are now being outnumbered by an influx of more educated, politically progressive workers to the state's booming high-tech industries.

New Hampshire Republicans still have the state's two U.S. senators. One of them, John Sununu, is up for re-election next year and trailing badly in the polls against former Democratic Gov. Jeanne Shaheen. If Sununu gets knocked off, Democrats will quickly train their sights on Sen. Judd Gregg, who faces the voters again in 2010.

Revolutions do come to an end and often set off reactions. That happened in France. And New Hampshire's independent streak makes its electorate somewhat unpredictable.

But New Hampshire Democrats seem too busy to fixate on such concerns. As they see it, the tumbrels are still rolling to the guillotine.